

Report to: Cabinet

Date: 24th September, 2009

Subject: Youth Facilities

Report of: Executive Director of Children and Young People's Services

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Purpose / summary: To inform members of the potential development of a youth facility and requests for Council support in relation to its development and location and future operation.

Alternative options considered and reason for selecting the one recommended: Contained within the report.

Recommendation / decision: Members are recommended to:

- Give in principle support to the proposal to develop a youth facility
- Authorise negotiations to clarify the assistance required from the Council in relation to the siting of the development and its operation.

Key Decision: This report does not involve a key decision
The decision made as a result of this report will be published within **48 hours** and cannot be actioned until **seven working days** have elapsed, i.e. before 6th October 2009.

Risks / Implications:

Financial:	Terms of a possible disposal and revenue and operational arrangement to be determined.
Staffing:	Within existing resources
Policy:	Things to Do, Places to Go Strategy
Equal Opportunities - Has a Diversity Impact Assessment been conducted?	This will be developed as part of the development proposals.
Wards affected:	All

Property Implications – Does the proposal involve a reduction, addition or change to the Council’s asset base or its occupation?

Yes as a Council site has been proposed.

If yes, have the property implications been agreed with the Corporate Property Officer?

Yes although the terms of a possible disposal are not yet agreed

Has the Service Director - Borough Solicitor confirmed that the recommendations within this report are lawful and comply with the Council's Constitution? **Yes**

Has the Service Director - Corporate Services confirmed that any expenditure referred to within this report is consistent with the Council's budget? **Yes**

Are any of the recommendations within this report contrary to the Policy Framework of the Council? **No**

* delete which applicable

For Cabinet reports only :

Categorisation of the report:	X		X
Discussion leading to a decision	X	Discussion	
Monitoring		Decision	
Sharing for corporate understanding		Information	

Tracking/Process:

	Consultation	Ward Members	Partners
Committee	Overview & Scrutiny	Cabinet	Council
		24 th September, 2009	

List of Background Papers in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972:

Title of document	Which meeting did it go to?	Date of meeting	Copy available from?
Things to Do, Places to Go Strategy	Cabinet	May 2008	Sue Astbury

Proper Officer _____

Date 10th September 2009

Background

1. This Report seeks to advise Cabinet Members of proposals that have been put forward to the Council by a charitable organisation, OnSide, a charitable organisation created to provide facilities and opportunities for young people. The proposal is to create, in Wigan, a purpose built youth facility which will be modelled, to some extent, on the Bolton Lads and Girls Club. A site has been identified, which is Council owned. This report seeks to inform Members of those proposals and considers both how the Council may be involved in both the development of the project and its future operation.
2. In principle the proposals contribute significantly to the delivery of the Council's priorities. The development of youth facilities supports the delivery of Local Area Agreement and Children and Young Peoples plan priorities to:
 - Reduce Children and Young Peoples involvement in anti-social behaviour;
 - Improve the range and accessibility of positive activities for all children and young people.
3. The Things To Do, Places to Go Strategy is based on the following principle:

“Wigan values its children and young people and will positively promote investment in them. It will effectively involve them in decision making above the local and borough wide level and deliver, in partnership with them, quality places, spaces and activities they actually need and that will enhance their development, enjoyment, safety, wellbeing and successful transition into adult life. The approach will be inclusive and barrier free. The children and young people in Wigan should see this offer as a right, accept their responsibilities to engage in positive behaviour is an important factor and will contribute to its success.”
4. The Council has previously considered papers regarding developments in support of this policy. The Meadows youth facility in Douglas Ward was funded by Youth Capital Plus. Other funding streams have been explored to extend the facilities available. An expression of interest was put forward in relation to My Place funding in June of this year to create a youth facility at Leigh Sports Village but, unfortunately, that bid was unsuccessful.
5. In the course of discussions around My Place funding, the Council has been approached by OnSide, working with private sector partners with regards to the development of a facility in the Wigan area. The development however, unlike other developments that the charity is progressing, would not be funded by way of My Place funding. The proposal is that the capital costs of the construction of the property would in part be funded by significant donations from individuals and in part by grant funding.

Site and Design

6. Various options for the siting of the development have been considered, the emphasis being placed on accessibility, a location close the bus station and in the town centre. As has been publicised, the preferred location of the charity is the Mesnes Playing Field to the rear of Civic Buildings. Various options for the siting of the development within the playing field have also been considered but the conclusion has been reached that the siting alongside Parsons Walk

between Drumcroon and Civic Buildings would represent the best option for planning purposes.

7. A substantial building is proposed with an overall internal floor space of some 3500 square metres. A wide range of uses for sports, arts and recreational facilities (including a sports hall) are proposed. The design would include a centrally positioned open recreation area (including a café) lying just beyond the main entrance to the building from Parsons Walk. The proposal is for modern contemporary design with a combined use of brickwork, glazing and translucent glazing.
8. The layout would incorporate four floodlit multi-use games areas (MUGA) within Mesnes playing field directly behind the building.
9. The treatment of the remainder of Mesnes playing field is a key consideration in relation to the proposal and the planning application for the development would need to be accompanied by a comprehensive proposal for this area.
10. There have been detailed discussions of the proposals with planning officers and public consultation will be launched in the week commencing the 14th September.

Disposal Terms

11. As indicated, the site that is preferred by OnSide is within the Council's ownership and appropriate land disposal terms need to be agreed. These must reflect not only the purpose of the development, the status of the charity but also the statutory obligations that the Council has in relation to receiving appropriate consideration.
12. In other schemes developed by the charity in other boroughs the disposal has been based on a long lease term, 125 years, with only a nominal consideration by way of rent. Initial discussions in relation to form of lease have been positive, in the sense that it has been accepted that the lease, or any necessary initial Agreement for Lease, would contain quite specific development provisions, tying the arrangements to an agreed specification and development plan. The lease would clearly restrict the use of the premises to the purposes of the charity with appropriate provisions for determination in the event of an alternative use.
13. Any agreement would be fully conditional upon appropriate planning consent and the satisfaction of the Council in relation to both funding for the development and a continuing business plan.
14. In relation to other sporting developments, the Council has demonstrated flexibility in relation to how it meets its statutory obligations in relation to the recovery of an appropriate consideration and it is suggested that consideration be given to such issues as the use of facilities by others, the ability to pursue health/educational projects at the premises and possibly also involvement in governance arrangements.
15. The business plan for the project in relation to its operation and revenue costs will be a significant matter for the Council. An indication has been given that in similar developments local authority support, at a certain level, has been given

and indications have been made to this Council that there will be a similar expectation here. Clearly further discussions upon the nature of that support, the amount of that support and the impact upon the Council's budgets and operations will be necessary.

Conclusion

16. In conclusion this is a significant opportunity for the Borough, but clearly there are implications for the Council. Members are requested to indicate their support for the development, comment on the principles to be applied to moving forward the development and authorise officers of the relevant departments to pursue discussions with the charity with a view to reporting back on the various issues raised in the report.

Recommendation

17. Members are recommended to:
 - Give in principle support to the proposal to develop a youth facility
 - Authorise negotiations to clarify the assistance required from the Council in relation to the siting of the development and its operation.